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MUSCODA, 1763-1856

BY
JOSEPH SCHAFER

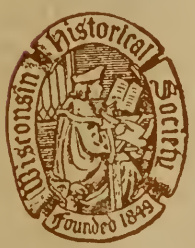

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Photo by
Edward C. Nelson

WM. STEPHEN HAMILTON, FOUNDER OF MUSCODA

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MUSCODA, 1763–1856

Joseph Schafer

The light which local inquiry can shed upon general history is well illustrated from a variety of viewpoints in the story of the Wisconsin village which is the subject of this sketch.

Muscoda as a present-day railway station is inconspicuously located on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul line, Prairie du Chien division, at the distance of fifty-six miles almost due west from Madison, one hundred and fifty-two from Milwaukee; it is forty-two miles east from Prairie du Chien. The village was begun at the river bank on the south side of Wisconsin River, in section 1, township 8 north, range 1 west of the fourth principal meridian. It stretches south from the river toward the flanking hills about three-fourths of a mile, the main portion now clustering about the depot, whereas the "Old Town" lay farther north and hugged the river bank.

The ground on which Muscoda stands is a portion of the sandy plain, the outwash of the erosion process by which the Wisconsin and its larger tributaries worked their way through the sandstone stratum. The upper courses of these tributaries and the smaller streams which feed them have laid down flood bottoms of rich alluvium. Often, too, the bench land of their valleys is a fertile limestone soil intermingled with clayey patches and occasional streaks of sand. These are all characteristics of the "Driftless Area," as the geologists have named this region, because the various primordial movements of glacial ice, so influential in modifying the topography elsewhere, passed around instead of over it, leaving no "drift" upon it. The terrain is just what the eroding waters in the course of countless ages made it—a

system of regular valleys perfectly drained and bounded by symmetrically sculptured hills or bluffs, which exhibit a level sky line and decrease in altitude steadily till at the heads of the streams they merge in the great plateau or "prairie" of southern Wisconsin. The valleys make natural and not ill-graded highways from the prairie to the Wisconsin River, while the ranges of bluffs separating them appear like promontories running out fingerwise from the main plateau and terminating either where two smaller streams converge or at the edge of the lower plain laid down by the Wisconsin.

The principal stream entering the Wisconsin from the south, in the neighborhood of Muscoda, is Blue River—the "Riviere Bleu" of the French traders. It has several head streams rising in township 6–1 E, and a large affluent named the Fennimore rising in 6–1 W, the Six Mile Creek, rising in 7–1 E and Sandy Branch which heads in 8–1 E. There are also several small branches entering the Fennimore from 7–2 W. In its lower course the Blue River swerves to the west, entering the Wisconsin near Blue River Station, in Township 8–2 W, but its rich upper valleys and those of its tributaries have always been mainly within the trade area of Muscoda. North of the Wisconsin the valleys most intimately associated with Muscoda are Indian Creek, Eagle Creek, and Knapp's Creek in Richland County. The "Sand Prairie," by which name the sandy plain along the Wisconsin on the south side has long been known, and a narrow tract of shelving land between the river and the hills on the north are also within the Muscoda area.

Since the bluffs are mostly rough land, with only limited areas on their summits where the soil is deep, free from stones, and sufficiently even for cultivation, and the sand prairie comparatively infertile, Muscoda as a trade center suffers from the low average productivity of her territory. Still, from pioneer days the long valleys beyond the sand

prairie have yielded abundant harvests; the roads through them from the high prairie to the south opened to Muscoda's merchants for some years a great trade in livestock and grain beyond her legitimate boundaries; while the cross ranges which run out from the high prairie northward approximately fifteen miles forced the only rival railway,[1] when it came, back upon the great ridge, leaving the north trending valleys still as a whole tributary to Muscoda.

THE BACKGROUND

According to Father Verwyst, a distinguished authority, the name Muscoda is a corruption of the Chippewa word "Mashkodeng" which means "prairie." A similar corruption occurs in the name "Muscatine," a town in Iowa, and there was a tribe of Indians on the Upper Fox River called Mascouten (prairie Indians).

The earlier name of the place was English Prairie, and while it is clear that geography suggested "Prairie" (or Savannah), there are various traditions to explain the association of the word "English" with it. One is that some English families were settled there as early as 1812 and that they were massacred by the Indians. Another, that the place was so named from the fact that Colonel McKay, who descended the river in 1814 with a regiment of British troops to capture Prairie du Chien, encamped at this place which thereafter was called English Prairie.

A more hopeful clue to the origin of the name occurs in the journal of Willard Keyes, a young New Englander who passed down the river with a party in 1817. He writes, under date of August 29, 1817: "pass a place called 'English meadow' from an English trader and his son, said to have been murdered there by the savages, 20 Leagues to Prairie

[1] The Chicago and Northwestern. It follows in the sector south of Muscoda the old military road from Fort Winnebago to Fort Crawford. Towns taking some of Muscoda's former trade are Montfort, Fennimore, and Cobb.

du Chien."[2] Now, the fact of "an English trader and his son" being murdered at some point on the Wisconsin River between the Portage and Prairie du Chien is well established. In the journal of Lieut. James Gorrell, the first English commandant at Green Bay after the ejection of the French, we read, under date of June 14, 1763: "The traders came down from the Sack [Sauk] country, and confirmed the news of Landsing and his son being killed by the French." When all the Sauk and Foxes had arrived at Green Bay a few days later they told Gorrell that their people were all in tears "for the loss of two English traders who were killed by the French in their lands, and begged leave . . . to cut them [the French] in pieces."[3]

In the following summer, 1764, Garrit Roseboom testified, that "about the latter end of April, 1763, he was going from the Bay [Green Bay] to the Soaks [Sauk] to look for his Partner Abrah[a]m Lancing who had been up there, being told that he was killed, that on his way he met some Indians coming down with some Packs [of furs], which he knew to be his, and which they said he could have for paying the carriage. That both the French and Indians told him, Mr. Lancing and his son were killed by two Frenchmen" who were servants of Mr. Lansing and who afterwards escaped to the Illinois Indians.[4]

When we reflect how persistent is the memory of great tragedies and recall that some of the French traders and voyageurs who were on the river when the murder took place remained there for many years and handed down the traditions of the river to their successors, it is not hard to believe that it was the story of Abraham Lansing and his son, slightly altered, which Willard Keyes heard from the rivermen as his boat drifted along the "English meadow" in

[2] *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, III, 352.
[3] *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, I, 38, 41.
[4] *Wis. Hist. Colls.* XVIII, 263-64.

1817. The French traders in whose company he was would not be likely to ascribe the murder to their own people so long as there were "savages" who might just as well serve as scapegoats. We may consider it almost certain, then, that the place came to be called English Prairie from the gruesome crime of 1763, which had occurred almost three-quarters of a century before the postoffice of that name was established, and more than half a century prior to the voyage of Willard Keyes. Jonathan Carver, who visited a village of the Fox Indians at that place in 1766, does not use the name; but neither does he mention the story of the murder which occurred only three years before.

No definite information about the fur trade at English Prairie, aside from the record in Lansing's case, has come down to us. Tradition has it that Laurent Rolette, brother of the famous Prairie du Chien trader, Joseph Rolette, traded there for some years, going later to the Portage. It appears also that some time before the arrival of white settlers a trader named Armstrong operated in that neighborhood. But no details have been preserved and we can only infer from the fact that Indians were still numerous when settlers came that the trade at English Prairie in earlier times was probably important.

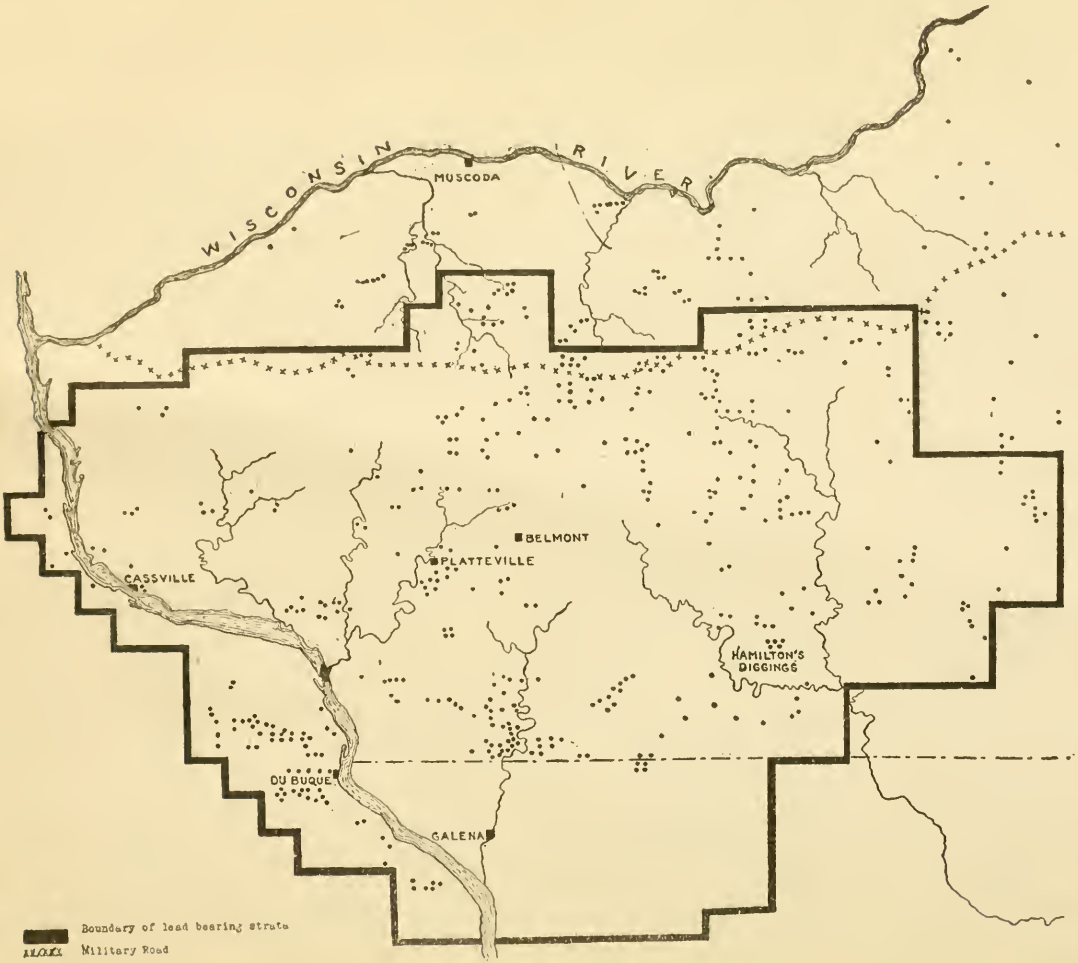
It was the Black Hawk War and the treaties following it that produced the revolutionary change in the life of the natives in this region. From that time forward Indians could live south of the river only on sufferance, though they were permitted to roam the forests to the northward for about a quarter of a century longer. During the Black Hawk War a detachment of Colonel Henry Dodge's Mounted Volunteers went to English Prairie, another detachment going at the same time to Prairie du Chien. Between them these two bodies of troops scoured both sides of the Wisconsin from the mouth to the Portage, dislodging all natives. English Prairie was also the camping ground for

a military company composed of friendly Indians recruited at Green Bay and led to Prairie du Chien by Samuel C. Stambaugh in July, 1832. The route of march was from Green Bay to the Portage, thence to Sugar Creek (near Blue Mounds), thence to Fort Dodge (Dodgeville), thence to English Prairie, thence to Prairie du Chien "with one other camping between."

RELATION TO THE LEAD MINES

History repeats itself in making the Indian War of 1832 the impulse to a great new expansion movement among American pioneers. Just as the Pequod War of 1638 by familiarizing the coast settlers of Massachusetts with the rich lands of the interior enticed them westward, and as the Seven Years' War destroyed the last obstacle to western and northern expansion in New England, so in a very real sense this war made the beginnings of the agricultural settlement in Wisconsin. Immediately after the Black Hawk War the survey of the lands in southern Wisconsin began. In the four years, 1832 to 1836, the entire region from the Illinois line north to the Wisconsin, the Fox, and Green Bay, and from the Mississippi to Lake Michigan, was checked off into townships and sections. Hardy, resourceful government surveyors, with their crews (usually two chainmen and one axman) traversed every square mile, whether prairie, forest, valley, or bluff. In 1834 a land office was opened at Mineral Point for the sale of lands in the western portion of Michigan Territory (as it was then).

The ranges of townships numbered 1 W and 1 E, of which the townships numbered eight (Muscoda and Pulaski) bounded by the Wisconsin, were for some years the northernmost, were surveyed by Sylvester Sibley in 1833. The next year those lands were offered for sale and some tracts along the river were actually sold to private individuals. Among the purchasers were Thomas Jefferson Par-



THE LEAD REGION
After Owens' Geological Chart, 1839; drawn by Mary Stuart Foster

rish and Charles Bracken, who were well-known lead miners and smelters living farther south. Others among the early land owners of Township 8–1 W have been identified as mining men.

The lead mines, while known and worked by Indians and a few traders for many years, received the first large body of emigrants in 1828, when several thousand came scattering out widely over the territory which now constitutes Grant, Iowa, and Lafayette counties in Wisconsin, together with adjacent parts of Iowa. These were the lead miners who under Dodge and Hamilton fought the Black Hawk War. It was these hardy pioneers who as troopers patrolled the Wisconsin River and who finally delivered the coup de grace to Black Hawk's band far to the north on the banks of the Mississippi.

Many of the lead miners were shrewd business men always on the lookout for good financial prospects. With the knowledge of new regions gained during the war, either from personal observation or from reliable report, with the sense of a new era opening to settlement and expansion in the region dependent for transportation facilities on the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers, it is not strange that some of them should have been interested in river points lying as far outside the mineral belt proper as did English Prairie.

A RIVER PORT

For it is clear that it was water and not lead that the pioneers of Muscoda sought. Surveyors and prospectors had found no hopeful signs of mineral north of townships 6–1 W and 7–1 E. A few years later (1839) Dr. David Dale Owen, the geologist, made his famous survey of the lead region and excluded from it everything north of the heads of Blue River in townships 6 and 7–1 E. When the lands in township 8–1 W were offered for sale in November, 1834, it was precisely the river front lots and subdivisions which

were taken first. Parrish entered fractional lots 2 and 3 of section 1; Frederick Bronson the northeast fraction of the southeast quarter of section 1; Isaac Bronson the south half of the southeast fractional quarter; Garrit V. Denniston the southeast half of the fractional southwest quarter; and Denniston and Charles Bracken fraction No. 4 of fractional section 1. Other water front tracts in section 2 were bought by Denniston at this time; between 1836 and 1841 other tracts in the same sections were bought by others. All of these lands were obviously deemed favorable locations for a prospective town dependent on river transportation.

The way in which the village was begun, by the erection of a smelting furnace, is rather startling, in view of the absence of lead in the region adjacent. The motives which induced Colonel William S. Hamilton of Wiota to build a furnace at English Prairie can only be conjectured.

Colonel Hamilton was the son of the great Alexander Hamilton, Washington's Secretary of the Treasury. As a lad of seventeen in 1814 he entered West Point but resigned in 1817 to accept a commission as deputy surveyor-general under Col. William Rector, surveyor-general for Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. From that time young Hamilton was almost continuously in the West, though he made one trip east, on horseback, to see his mother. He was in Wisconsin as early as 1825 and in 1827 began his career as a lead miner and smelter in what is now Lafayette County at Wiota or Hamilton's Diggings. He took part in the Indian troubles of 1827, and also in the Black Hawk War.

It is not known with certainty when Hamilton established his furnace at English Prairie. Tradition says it was in the year 1835. If the furnace was operating then, it is strange that so careful an observer as Featherstonhaugh, who dropped down the Wisconsin in August, 1835 and stopped at English Prairie to draw a sketch of its landscape,

should have failed to note that fact.[5] We are probably justified in asserting that the furnace was not there at that time. But we know it was there in 1837, for Captain Frederick Marryat, a famous English writer who descended the river in that year, saw "a small settlement called the English prairie" where there was a "smelting-house and a steam saw-mill."[6] I incline to think the year 1836 was the date of its beginning. In 1835 Hamilton was a candidate for member of the Council from the western part of Michigan Territory. His canvass was conducted in the lead mining region and his advertisement appeared in the Galena papers. He was elected to and became president of the so-called "Rump" Council which met at Green Bay January 1, 1836 and sat for two weeks. During that session the town of Cassville, on the Mississippi, was designated as the territorial capital, Hamilton making the principal argument in favor of the movement. Much interest was manifested in internal improvements designed to develop a through line of transportation via the Wisconsin and Fox rivers.[7] The territory of Wisconsin was just being organized by Congressional action and great expectations were being awakened in consequence.

The miners and smelters had theretofore sold their lead through the commission merchants of Galena, by whom it was sent to St. Louis. But as new mines were opened farther and farther north, the cost of transportation to Galena—by means of the "sucker teams"[8]—steadily increased. Moreover, in the year 1836–37 the price of lead declined so alarmingly that little of it was made and the smelters had

[5] Featherstonhaugh was obviously in error in calling that stopping place Prairie de la Bay. The context shows it must have been English Prairie. See his *A Canoe Voyage on the Minnay Sotor*, I, 199-201.

[6] *Wis. Hist. Colls.* XIV, 147.

[7] The Portage canal was begun in 1836 by a private company. Its completion was promised in 1837. See Governor Dodge's message to the Legislative Assembly, Belmont, Oct. 26, 1836.

[8] Ox-teams owned by Illinois farmers.

nearly all ceased to operate. Yet, it was felt that prices would rise again promptly in response to the demand for lead. In the same period, due no doubt partly to the hardships of the miners and smelters, there was widespread and loud dissatisfaction with the treatment accorded the lead owners by the Galena middlemen. Efforts were made to establish some other lead shipping port as a rival to Galena, which helps to explain the rise of both Cassville and Potosi.

The inference from these facts is that Hamilton probably thought he saw in a smelter located at the steamboat landing at English Prairie a possibility of immediate profit, even though margins were very narrow, and a chance to build up a flourishing business. He could buy the cheapest ore—that which was produced near the northern edge of the lead region, Centerville, Wingville, and Highland. The haul from those places would be short and all down grade and if the mineral were taken direct from the mines there would be no rehandling until the bars of pure lead were ready to be dumped from the furnace floor into the hold of the steamer. The teams employed to bring down the raw mineral could carry freight back the fifteen or twenty miles to the mines much more cheaply than it could be transported from Galena or Cassville three or four times as far. Finally, abundant supplies of wood were at hand to feed the furnace, and French rivermen were a source from which to recruit labor.

To an enterprising, speculative, acquisitive character like Hamilton, who had no family to tie him to a particular spot, such arguments would appeal strongly, and there is no inherent reason why the venture should not have succeeded. Hamilton operated the furnace, either personally or by proxy, at least till 1838 and possibly longer, selling it finally to Thomas Jefferson Parrish, whose principal mining and smelting business was located at the head of Blue River, afterwards Montfort.

The fact that Parrish owned the ground at the steamboat landing and that in 1837 he was postmaster at English Prairie (then called Savannah) suggests that he may have been a partner in the business from the first and perhaps local manager of the furnace. At all events, Hamilton continued his business at Wiota and very soon cut loose entirely from the English Prairie venture.[9] That place, under the name of Savannah or English Prairie, was a calling place for river steamers as early as 1838 and is scheduled as forty-one miles from the mouth of the Wisconsin.[10] It was said that the only boat which regularly plied on the river in that year was the *Science*, piloted by Captain Clark, who made his first voyage in June, 1838.[11] But there were doubtless visits from steamers running to Fort Winnebago (Portage) during that and earlier years.

In one of the Milwaukee papers for 1841 is a statement that "four sucker teams" had brought in lead from Thomas Parrish's furnace "near Muscoday in Grant County." This reference has been taken as proof that the Muscoda furnace was still in operation. I think it refers not to the Muscoda furnace but to one of several furnaces Parrish was conducting in the lead region near the heads of Blue River. The phrase "near Muscoday" used as far from the lead region as Milwaukee may very well mean some place fifteen or twenty miles from the Wisconsin; and the word "near" instead of "at" certainly excludes Muscoda itself. Setting this evidence aside, there is no proof that the Muscoda furnace was operated as late as 1841. Nor, on the other hand, is there proof of its earlier discontinuance. We simply do

[9] Hamilton went to California during the gold rush, finding, however, not a fortune but an untimely grave.

[10] See Abel, Henry I. Geographical, Geological, and Statistical Chart of Wisconsin and Iowa, Phila. 1838. The fare for passengers from St. Louis to Helena (it was doubtless the same to Savannah) was in the cabin from $10 to $15 and on the deck from $2 to $4.

[11] Smith, William R., *Observations*, 44.

not know how long it was kept alive or how large a business it developed at the "Landing."

SIGNS OF HARD TIMES

Two things suggest that the little village failed to develop a "boom" or even to gain a basis for healthy growth. These are the land entries in the territory adjacent and the story of the post office. Practically, there were no new entries of land between the years 1841 and 1849. This is true for all the townships in the tributary region—7, 8, and 9, range 1 W, and 7, 8, and 9, range 1 E. The post office under the name of Savannah appears in the government list for the first time in the report for 1837. At that time Thomas J. Parrish was postmaster. In 1839 S. A. Holley was postmaster, the office then being listed as English Prairie. The postmaster's compensation was $5.68. Charles Stephenson's compensation in 1841 was even smaller, $3.36, the ne proceeds of the office amounting to only $7.55. In 1843, for the first time, the post office was called Muscoda. The postmaster was Levi J. D. Parrish, who received as compensation $9.29, the net proceeds of the office having risen to $16.51.

It is probable that most of the seeming prosperity of 1843 was due to the presence of the land office, which had been removed from Mineral Point to Muscoda in 1842. Some have charged that the change was brought about through James D. Doty's influence in order to save the town. If so, the scheme failed, for the land office promptly went back to Mineral Point in 1843, and May 16, 1845, the post office department discontinued the office at Muscoda. Muscoda was not listed in the post office report for 1847 or in the report for 1849. In 1851 it reappears, with James Moore as postmaster. Now the compensation is $39.74 and the net proceeds $53.09. The exact date of its restoration

is not given but it must have been as early as 1850, and possibly 1849 or even 1847.[12]

BEGINNINGS OF SETTLEMENT

The reopening of the Muscoda post office, about 1850, synchronizes with the first movement of pioneer farmers into the good lands tributary to that place. A number of tracts of land were purchased by actual settlers in this and adjoining townships in the years 1849 to 1851. Indeed, Conrad Kircher's purchase dates from 1847. Charles Miller and Emanuel Dunston bought land in 1849; Isaac Dale and Moses Manlove in 1851. We know also that the Moore family owned land at Muscoda as early as 1851. Across the river, in township 9–1 W, Robert Galloway, William Pickering, William and Andrew Miller, and two or three others bought in 1849; several in 1850; and a few others before 1854, when the great rush came.

A similar story can be told for township 9–1 E (now Orion) where J. H. Schuermann and Daniel Mainwaring (settlers) bought lands in 1849; Albert C. Dooley in 1850;

[12] If the office was not open in 1847 it is hard to explain the language used by a correspondent of the Prairie du Chien *Patriot*, Feb. 23, 1847, who says: "The mail from . . . Mineral Point to Muskoda goes but once a week. There is no post office in Richland County; their post office is at Muskoda." The census of 1846 assigns to the northern district of Grant County 1,482 persons. It is possible to identify in the lists of heads of families six families whose later homes were at or near Muscoda. They are John D. Parrish, James Smith, Manuel Denston [Dunston?], Thomas Waters, Wm. Garland, and Richard Hall. All of these are met with again in the census returns for Dec. 1, 1847, where the "Muscoday Precinct of Grant County is listed separately. The precinct seems to have included townships 7 and 8–1 W and townships 7 and 8–2 W, or the present towns of Muscoda, Castle Rock, Watterstown, and Hickory Grove. That precinct is credited with thirteen families aggregating 77 persons. Aside from the families mentioned above (except Denston) we find the names of S. [R?] Carver, J. Moore, N. Head, M. Manlove, D. Manlove, I. Dale, S. Smith, D. Smith, and A. Mills. Garland is credited with a family consisting of nine males and two females, which confirms the statement in the county history that he was managing a hotel in Muscoda at that time. Moses Manlove has a family of seven males and five females which suggests a second hotel or "boarding house." Most of the other families mentioned probably lived some distance from Muscoda on farms. Aside from those in Muscoda Precinct of Grant County, several families living in Iowa County, township 8 1–E, must have depended for their supplies either on Muscoda or on Highland. These were John Pettygrove, A. Palmer, A. Bolster, three Knowlton families, Mathias Schafer, Henry Gottschall, Vincent Dziewanawski, and the two Wallbridges. If Richland County settlers really were, as reported, getting their mail at Muscoda, that would mean, according to the census, that 235 persons living north of the Wisconsin must have done some trading at that place. The county history says the old log house once used as the land office served in 1847 as the store.

and Jacob Roggy in 1851. One of the purchasers of 1848, John H. Siegrist, was probably the earliest actual settler in the township. A half dozen families bought in township 8–1 E as early as 1849; and a few others were added before 1854. A very few settlers were to be found in township 7–1 W prior to 1854, and while there were a good many settlers and miners in township 7–1 E, the greater part of that township was served from Highland where a post office was established as early at least as 1847 and where there was much lead mining activity, and from Blue River which had a post office from 1839. These mining centers doubtless drew their supplies from the steamers unloading at Muscoda, for the road to the river at that point had been open for many years, but settlement was more numerous and local activity much more intense, as revealed by the post office returns. The Highland post office led the Muscoda post office in importance for just about ten years—from 1847 to 1856. With the coming of the railroad, Muscoda drew ahead.

THE RAILROAD

If one had no other evidence than the sales of land at the United States Land Office, it would still be clear that in the years 1854 to 1856 something important was astir affecting the value of lands in those townships (7, 8, and 9—1 W, and 7, 8, and 9—1 E) which pivot on Muscoda as the trading point. For, while up to 1854 only scattering tracts of land had been entered, and those largely by speculators using military land warrants in making payment to the government, by 1856 nearly every forty-acre subdivision of first-rate land and much of the second-rate land also was under private ownership. And the state lands in the townships had also been purchased to the same extent. Besides, the vast majority of the purchasers of government land during those years were actual settlers, with only an occasional speculator.[13]

[13] This is not true of the state lands, which went mainly to speculators first, then to settlers.

These facts challenge attention and call for an explanation. Wisconsin had been in course of settlement for about two decades. The earliest settlements were in the southeastern and eastern parts of the state where the economic support was the market reached by the Great Lakes and the Erie Canal; and in the southwestern section where the basis of prosperity had been lead-mining. The lead found its market mainly down the Mississippi, though increasingly the superiority of the route open to the lake ports had impressed itself upon the people.

At the legislative session of 1841–42 a bill was introduced for the chartering of a railroad from Milwaukee, via Madison, to Potosi. Despite continuous effort, the first railroad bill to pass, in 1847, provided only for a railroad from Milwaukee to Waukesha. In 1848 this was by law extended to the Mississippi.

The agitation of plans for a railroad from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi tended to give the lake route an overshadowing importance in the popular mind. Actual construction work on the Milwaukee-Waukesha section began in 1849; that portion of the road was completed by the end of the year 1850, and in another year it was practically completed to Whitewater on Rock River. It reached Madison in the year 1854.

The intention of the company had been to build to the Wisconsin River so as to intercept steamboat transportation at or near Arena. Thence the road might run along the river to its mouth, or it might run along the ridge between the Wisconsin and the south flowing streams, reaching the Mississippi at some point, like Potosi, lower down. By the year 1853 it had been determined to follow the Wisconsin Valley route to the Mississippi, and during that summer the line was surveyed from the mouth of Black Earth Creek to Prairie du Chien.

It can easily be imagined how the clangor of railway construction echoed in the minds and hearts of intending settlers. That they should have watched, with greedy eye, the reports of progress of the location of the road and hurried away to the land office as soon as it was definitely located, to buy the good lands adjacent to the right-of-way, is a perfectly normal phenomenon. The township plats showing original purchasers of the government land tell the story. In section 1, township 7–1 W, four forty-acre tracts were bought in 1854; eleven in 1855; and one in 1856. In section 2, one in 1854; twelve in 1855; and two in 1857. A single forty had been bought as early as 1847. The other sections of that township show very similar dates and proportions in the entries; the same is true of the other townships of the group. The 1854 entrymen were those who pursued the railway surveyors with keenest determination. The slower ones came mainly in the two years following, during which trains actually were put on the roadbed. In October, 1856, the village of Muscoda, which had maintained a precarious existence for twenty years, awoke to newness of life at the sound of the puffing locomotive. And the beginning of permanent prosperity for the village meant the beginning of prosperity for the rural neighborhood tributary to it.

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